

# The impact of character education value internalization on students' life skills: The moderating role of parental involvement



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**Abstract** This study examines the effect of character education internalization on students' life skills, with parental involvement as a mediating variable. The study is motivated by the limited implementation of character education in schools and the varied involvement of parents in supporting children's life skills development. A quantitative approach was employed using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS software. The sample consisted of 372 junior high school students in West Java Province, Indonesia, selected through multistage proportional random sampling. The research instruments measured character education internalization, parental involvement, and students' life skills, all of which met validity and reliability criteria (outer loading > 0.70, Cronbach's alpha > 0.70, Composite Reliability > 0.70, AVE > 0.50). Structural model analysis showed that character education internalization had a positive and significant effect on students' life skills ( $\beta = 0.440$ ;  $t = 4.693$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). Parental involvement also significantly mediated this relationship ( $\beta = 0.158$ ;  $t = 4.201$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). The  $R^2$  value of 0.406 indicated that the model explains 40.6% of the variance in students' life skills, categorized as moderate, while the  $Q^2$  value of 0.096 demonstrates adequate predictive relevance. The  $f^2$  results suggested that both the direct effect of character education internalization (0.138) and the mediating effect of parental involvement (0.080) were small but statistically significant. These findings highlight the importance of collaboration between schools and families in fostering character values to strengthen students' life skills. They also contribute an integrative conceptual model that can serve as a reference for schools, parents, and policymakers in advancing character education practices through multi-actor collaboration.

**Keywords:** educational policy, family engagement, family-school collaboration, pancasila internalization, student personal growth, 21st century skills

## 1. Introduction

Character education is increasingly recognized as a critical factor in equipping students with 21st-century life skills, particularly in facing the challenges of globalization and technological disruption. UNESCO (2015) reported that more than 60% of students in developing countries experience gaps in noncognitive skills such as discipline, responsibility, and empathy, which are fundamental to character formation. This global issue is also present in Indonesia, where a national survey conducted by the Ministry of Education and Culture revealed that 53% of primary and secondary schools face difficulties in consistently internalizing character values within the curriculum (BPS-Statistics Indonesia, 2024). The internalization of character education values is therefore essential in shaping students' life skills, as early moral education strengthen critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and self-regulation (Datuk & Arifin, 2020; Marasabessy et al., 2022). Research further indicates that students exposed to consistent character education demonstrate greater resilience and better social competence (Cheung & Lee, 2010; Dakir et al., 2015; Santoso et al., 2020).

The effectiveness of character education in developing life skills, however, cannot be separated from parental involvement. International studies highlight that parental engagement significantly contributes to educational success, not only in academic performance but also in socioemotional development (Ates, 2021; Deslandes et al., 2010; Fan & Chen, 2001; González-Pienda et al., 2002; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Higgins & Katsipatiki, 2015; Jeynes, 2003; Jordan et al., 2001; Shumow & Miller, 2001). Such involvement has been consistently associated with the strengthening of students' life skills, including social competence, communication, and problem-solving abilities (Junaidi et al., 2018). More recent study also underscores that integrating Pancasila-based character education with parental engagement can create a synergistic framework for fostering holistic student development (Achadah et al., 2022; Hosna et al., 2025; Sari et al., 2023; Shofa, 2021). Parental



involvement also contributes to children's emotional development and behavior (Lin et al., 2023; McCormick et al., 2013), well-being (Baig et al., 2021; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Wenk et al., 1994), social skills (Nokali et al., 2010; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Spence et al., 2000) and school attendance (Baig et al., 2021; Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; Ross, 2016).

The OECD (2020) reported that active parental engagement can increase students' social skill achievement by up to 34%, which is consistent with evidence that family communication and support strengthen intrinsic motivation and adaptability (Ates, 2021; Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; Hornby and Blackwell, 2018; Ntekane, 2018). In Indonesia, character education rooted in religious and social values has been shown to improve prosocial behavior, social concern, and academic achievement (Abdulah, 2018; Achadah et al., 2022; Ntekane, 2018) and enhance both social concern and academic achievement (Abdulah, 2018; Anam et al., 2019; Epstein & Sheldon, 2002). Such involvement not only affects the academic domain but also strengthens students' socioemotional adaptability, which is highly relevant to the challenges of the 21st century (Oranga et al., 2023). Studies in boarding schools further revealed that combining character education with parental roles increased student discipline by more than 40% (Sumarsono et al., 2025). Broader evidence confirms that structured internalization models contribute to shaping the Pancasila Student Profile and preparing Indonesia's Golden Generation 2045 (Astari et al., 2024; Lickona, 2004; Manikandan, 2025; Salleh & Rosli, 2019; Ratnasari et al., 2024; Sukirno et al., 2023). Nevertheless, barriers such as time constraints, socioeconomic conditions, and limited parental understanding often hinder effective involvement (Kamal et al., 2024; Chung et al., 2019; Hornby & Blackwell, 2018; Jezierski and Wall, 2017). Parents from minority or disadvantaged backgrounds may struggle to engage despite their willingness (Crozier, 2001; Crozier & Davies, 2007; Kim, 2009; Mcneal, 2014; Turney & Kao, 2009). Furthermore, Binaymin et al., (2020), Harackiewicz et al., (2016) and Thoman et al. (2011) underscore that insufficient consideration of family needs—such as flexible meeting schedules and access to adequate facilities—represents a significant obstacle to effective parental involvement. These issues highlight that while school-based character education is important, parental engagement remains critical for the development of life skills. This study addresses this gap by examining how character education internalization can be optimized through parental involvement as a moderating factor, ultimately fostering students who are both academically accomplished and equipped with life skills for 21st-century challenges (Arthur et al., 2016; Fadhli et al., 2022; Kristjánsson, 2022; Lapsley & Woodbury, 2016).

Over the past decade, many studies have explored character education, life skills, and family involvement, yet the findings remain inconsistent (Nasheeda et al., 2019; Was et al., 2006). Sul-toni et al. (2019) reported that character education instruments significantly shape social skills. Similarly, Ates (2021) confirmed the effectiveness of value internalization in Islamic boarding schools for fostering resilient student personalities. Zhong et al. (2024) reported that character internalization in boarding schools successfully improved student discipline, yet parental involvement was underexplored. Moreover, Astari et al. (2024) demonstrated that honesty-based internalization models enhance the quality of primary schools but do not comprehensively assess the contribution of life skills. Similarly, improvements in empathy among elementary students were shown through children's stories, although their work remained limited to moral aspects. Marasabessy et al. (2022) highlighted the importance of character education in addressing the degradation of civic virtues (Gasser et al., 2022), but parental moderation was not observed. At the international level, a research study reported a positive link between Islamic education and value internalization in Malaysia, although the study did not explicitly connect it with life skills (Dakir et al., 2015). More recent findings by Alwi et al. (2024) emphasized that character-based learning in Arabic language classes reinforced students' religious behavior, yet life skills were not explicitly measured. Mustofa et al. (2025) underscored the importance of Pancasila values in vocational schools, whereas Hadi et al., (2025) stressed religious-based strategies for character development; however, both studies did not empirically test parental involvement as a mediating factor. Other contributions, such as those of Natalia et al. (2021) and Jakandar et al. (2025), also overlooked distinctions between school and family contributions. This gap underscores the need for integrative empirical studies connecting character education, life skills, and parental involvement.

Previous research has demonstrated positive outcomes of character value internalization in shaping student behavior and competencies. Sul-toni et al. (2019) developed a valid instrument to measure the internalization of character education, whereas Junaidi and Cahyani (2016) emphasized the role of Islamic boarding schools in fostering discipline and independence among students. Similarly, Dieu and Andala (2021) reported that the implementation of character values in boarding schools improved student discipline by up to 40%. However, the mediating role of parental involvement is often overlooked. On the other hand, the literature consistently shows that parents substantially contribute to educational success. Mashudi et al. (2025), through a meta-analysis, demonstrated that parental involvement consistently improves learning outcomes, whereas Ates (2021) confirmed its significant effect on academic achievement across diverse contexts. In the Indonesian setting, Alam and Hamzah (2025) reported that intensive communication between parents and schools was associated with increased learning motivation and enhanced students' social skills. Nevertheless, integrative frameworks remain scarce. Scholars argue that effective character education requires both institutional support and philosophical grounding in moral and civic responsibility (Lu, 2024). Furthermore, research on Pancasila-based character education has emphasized its role in fostering holistic student profiles aligned with Indonesia's Golden Generation 2045 vision (Ediyono et al., 2025; Watts and Kristjánsson (2022). Similarly, Watts and Kristjánsson (2022) further stressed the importance of linking school initiatives with parental engagement to cultivate sustainable virtues and life skills. These insights strengthen the urgency of an integrative framework in which parental involvement mediates the relationship between character education and students' life skills.

Although character education has been formally integrated into national policies and school curricula, various surveys indicate that its implementation has not yet been fully effective. Yoshimori et al. (2022) highlighted that more than 60% of students in developing countries face significant gaps in noncognitive skills, whereas the Ministry of Education and Culture reported that 53% of primary and secondary schools in Indonesia encounter serious challenges in consistently applying character values. On the other hand, parental involvement—which should serve as a key factor in supporting children’s education—remains constrained by barriers such as work-related demands, socioeconomic background, and limited communication with schools (Ahmed et al., 2022). This situation raises a fundamental question: how can a character education model systematically integrate school and parents involvement to foster life skills for the 21st-century? Recent study suggests that integrating family engagement into school-based character education is essential to produce holistic outcomes (Arthur et al., 2016). In Indonesia, the Pancasila Student Profile highlights the importance of embedding moral and civic values through school–family collaboration (Natalia et al., 2021). Moreover, Paul et al. (2022) emphasized that character education becomes truly effective when reinforced both in institutional practice and at home. These perspectives highlight the urgency of developing a systematic framework that combines school-based character education with parental involvement to better equip students with the critical, adaptive, and socioemotional life skills needed in an era of rapid transformation.

This study offers a comprehensive approach by positioning parental involvement as a moderating variable between the internalization of character education and students’ life skills. This perspective differs from previous studies that focused primarily on the implementation of school-based character education programs without empirically examining the contribution of families (Marasabessy et al., 2022; Riyatin & Tanjungsari, 2025). The proposed model not only investigates classroom practices but also considers the broader dimensions of character education policy—normative, structural, and technical—as well as the policy-making process, including issue identification, agenda setting, and strategic formulation (Sakban & Sundawa, 2023; Thahir & Sa’ud, 2020). In doing so, this research systematically examines whether and to what extent parental involvement strengthens the impact of character value internalization on the development of students’ life skills. Moreover, by integrating the philosophical underpinnings of character education with parental engagement, this study contributes to advancing both theoretical and practical discourse in educational policy (Arthur et al., 2016). In the Indonesian context, it aligns with the Profil Pelajar Pancasila initiative, which emphasizes civic responsibility, empathy, and adaptability through school–family partnerships (Natalia et al., 2021). Hence, this research introduces an innovative conceptual model that bridges the gap between classroom-based character education and the indispensable role of parental involvement in shaping life skills relevant for the 21st century.

The novelty of this research lies in integrating three components that are often studied separately: character education internalization, life skills, and parental involvement. This study not only measures the effectiveness of internalization practices but also situates parental involvement as a strategic element in educational policy. The conceptual model aims to strengthen school–family collaboration and provide both theoretical contributions and practical recommendations for developing a generation that is strong in character, socioemotionally adaptive, and globally competitive.

## 2. Materials and Methods

### 2.1. Research design

This study employed a quantitative survey method to analyze the influence of character education internalization on students’ life skills, with parental involvement as a moderating variable. The design falls under correlational research, aiming to identify causal relationships among variables. Data were analyzed via structural equation modelling–partial least squares (SEM–PLS), chosen for its ability to test complex relationships among latent variables and assess moderation and mediation effects simultaneously (Alexandra et al., 2022). Furthermore, SEM–PLS is particularly suitable for predictive modelling and theory development when latent constructs are measured through multiple indicators (Hair & Alamer, 2022; Hair et al., 2020).

### 2.2. Population and sample

The population comprised 4,694 students from both public and private junior high schools (SMPs) in West Java Province, Indonesia. Sampling combined cluster and proportional random sampling techniques to ensure representation of all subgroups. Using Slovin’s formula with a 5% margin of error, the final sample size comprised 372 students.

### 2.3. Data collection

The variables were adapted from established frameworks. The student life skills (SLS) indicators are based on the life skills models of Longhini et al. (2022), the World Health Organization (WHO) (1993), and Ahun et al. (2023), and refined with 21st-century competencies (Kafes and Bilben, 2024; Tight, 2021). Indicators of Pancasila Internalization (PI) are adopted from Indonesia’s Profil Pelajar Pancasila framework launched by the Ministry of Education and Culture, which is supported by studies on character education and value internalization (Mashoedi et al., 2025). Moreover, indicators of parental involvement (PIN) are derived from the parental involvement model developed by (Hamlin, 2022) and supported by empirical evidence on home–

school collaboration (Ray, 2020). The research instrument was developed on the basis of indicators for each variable, as presented in the following Table 1.

**Table 1** Research Variables and Indicators.

Variable	Indicators
Student Life Skills (SLS) (Isaksen et al. 2025; Setiawan et al. 2022; Maksum et al. 2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Critical and Creative Thinking</li> <li>- Problem Solving and Decision Making</li> <li>- Stress and Emotional Management</li> <li>- Social Responsibility</li> <li>- Teamwork and Collaboration</li> <li>- Self-Esteem and Self-Awareness</li> <li>- Empathy and Interpersonal Relationships</li> <li>- Effective Communication</li> <li>- Time Management and Responsibility</li> <li>- Independence and Initiative</li> </ul>
Pancasila Internalization (PI) (Anugrah et al. 2025; Yanti, 2021; Lickona, 2004)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implementation of Pancasila Values in P5 Projects (Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila)</li> <li>- Character-Based Learning Innovation</li> <li>- Teachers' Role in Guiding Character Values</li> </ul>
Parental Involvement (PIN) (Deslandes et al., 2010; Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; Jeynes, 2003)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Home-based Learning Support</li> <li>- Active Communication with Schools</li> <li>- Participation in School Activities</li> </ul>

The main research instrument was a questionnaire developed via a five-point Likert scale with response options: always, often, sometimes, rarely, and never. Prior to large-scale implementation, the questionnaire was pilot tested to ensure its validity and reliability. The results of the pilot test indicated that all the items met the required criteria of validity and reliability, thus confirming its appropriateness as a measurement tool for this study. Data collection was conducted both offline (printed questionnaires) and online (Google Forms).

#### 2.4. Data analysis procedure

The analysis procedure in structural equation modelling–partial least squares (SEM–PLS) consists of several key stages (Hair et al., 2020). In this study, data were analysed via SEM–PLS through two main phases: (1) the assessment of the measurement model (the outer model), including tests of convergent validity, discriminant validity, and construct reliability; and (2) the assessment of the structural model (the inner model), involving  $R^2$  evaluation, testing the significance of path coefficients, and analysing the direct, indirect, and moderating effects of parental involvement on the relationship between character education value internalization and students' life skills.

At the initial stage, the measurement model (outer model) was evaluated to ensure construct quality used in this study. This evaluation covered three primary aspects: internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Internal consistency was assessed to determine the extent to which the indicators within each construct were correlated and consistently measured the same concept. A construct was considered reliable when the composite reliability (CR) value exceeded 0.70, the average variance extracted (AVE) was greater than 0.50, and the Cronbach's alpha surpassed 0.60 (Hair & Alamer, 2022; Dzin & Lay, 2021). Convergent validity was further evaluated to determine the degree to which the indicators reflected the underlying construct. According to Hair and Alamer (2022), an indicator is considered valid when it meets four criteria: outer loadings  $> 0.70$ , Cronbach's alpha  $> 0.70$ , CR  $> 0.70$ , and AVE  $> 0.50$ . The results of this study confirmed that all indicators measuring character education value internalization, parental involvement, and students' life skills satisfied these criteria. Thus, the constructs demonstrated adequate convergent validity, providing confidence in the robustness of the measurement model.

Discriminant validity was then assessed to ensure that each construct in the model was truly distinct and that no overlap occurred between constructs. This assessment was carried out via the Fornell–Larcker criterion (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) and the heterotrait–monotrait ratio (HTMT). The Fornell–Larcker criterion requires that the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) of a construct must be greater than its correlations with other constructs. In addition, the HTMT value serves as a more sensitive complementary measure, with a threshold of  $< 0.90$  indicating satisfactory discriminant validity (Rönkkö & Cho, 2022). The findings of this study reveal that all the constructs presented HTMT values below 0.90, confirming that each construct is unique and meets the criteria for discriminant validity. The measurement evaluation focused on the first-order constructs (lower-order constructs, LOC), as the second-order constructs (higher-order constructs, HOC) are abstractions derived from LOC and are therefore not tested separately (Hair et al., 2020).

Once the measurement model satisfied the required criteria, the next stage was to evaluate the structural model (inner model). This evaluation included several aspects, namely, (a) collinearity, which assesses the potential presence of strong linear relationships among independent variables; (b) t values, which evaluate the statistical significance of causal relationships between latent variables; (c) the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), which reflects the extent to which independent variables explain the variance of dependent variables; (d) effect size ( $f^2$ ), which indicates the relative contribution of each independent variable to the dependent variable; and (e) predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ), which measures the model's predictive accuracy regarding the dependent variables.

### 3. Results

Visually, the results of the PLS analysis—showing path coefficients ( $\beta$ ), the significance of the paths (p values), and the variance explained by the model ( $R^2$ )—are presented in Figure 1.

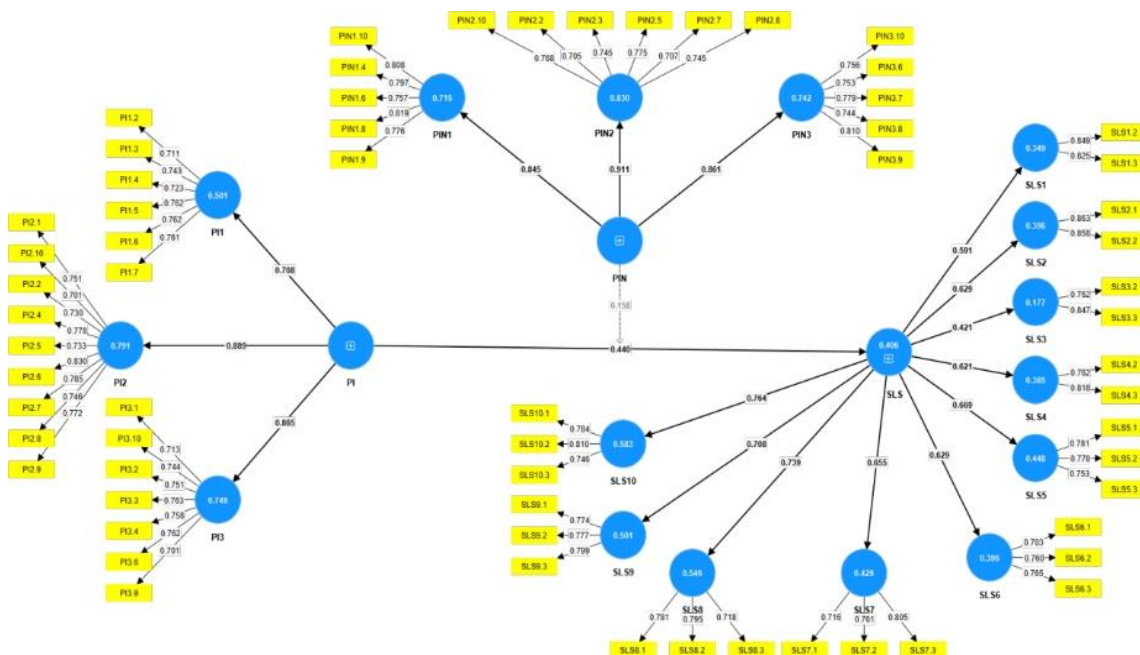


Figure 1 The main findings of the partial least squares algorithm, reporting path coefficients and R2 values.

#### 3.1. Assessment of the measurement model

Assessing the measurement model is a key step, as it provides evidence of the reliability and validity of the scales used to measure latent constructs and their indicators (El-Den et al., 2020).

##### 3.1.1. Convergent validity

Reliability was assessed via three indices: (i) Cronbach’s alpha, where values above 0.70 indicate acceptable reliability and above 0.80 indicate very good reliability; (ii) composite reliability (Hair & Alamer, 2022); and (iii) Dijkstra–Henseler’s rho ( $\rho_A$ ) (El-Den et al., 2020). For the latter two, a threshold of 0.70 is recommended (Hair et al., 2020). In this study, all values exceeded 0.70 for character education internalization, parental involvement, and students’ life skills, confirming adequate reliability (see Table 2).

Table 2 Output of the measurement model.

Variabel	Dimensi	Indicator	Outer Loading	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's alpha	AVE
PI	PI <sub>1</sub>	PI <sub>1,2</sub>	0.711	0.881	0.839	0.553
		PI <sub>1,3</sub>	0.743			
		PI <sub>1,4</sub>	0.723			
		PI <sub>1,5</sub>	0.762			
		PI <sub>1,6</sub>	0.762			
		PI <sub>1,7</sub>	0.761			
		PI <sub>2,1</sub>	0.751			
	PI <sub>2,2</sub>	0.730				
			PI <sub>2,4</sub>	0.778		



		<i>PI</i> <sub>2,5</sub>	0.733			
		<i>PI</i> <sub>2,6</sub>	0.830			
		<i>PI</i> <sub>2,7</sub>	0.785			
		<i>PI</i> <sub>2,8</sub>	0.746			
		<i>PI</i> <sub>2,9</sub>	0.772			
		<i>PI</i> <sub>2,10</sub>	0.701			
	<i>PI</i> <sub>3</sub>	<i>PI</i> <sub>3,1</sub>	0.713	0.895	0.864	0.55
		<i>PI</i> <sub>3,2</sub>	0.751			
		<i>PI</i> <sub>3,3</sub>	0.763			
		<i>PI</i> <sub>3,4</sub>	0.758			
		<i>PI</i> <sub>3,6</sub>	0.762			
		<i>PI</i> <sub>3,9</sub>	0.701			
		<i>PI</i> <sub>3,10</sub>	0.744			
<i>PIN</i>	<i>PIN</i> <sub>1</sub>	<i>PIN</i> <sub>1,4</sub>	0.797	0.893	0.851	0.627
		<i>PIN</i> <sub>1,6</sub>	0.757			
		<i>PIN</i> <sub>1,8</sub>	0.819			
		<i>PIN</i> <sub>1,9</sub>	0.776			
		<i>PIN</i> <sub>1,10</sub>	0.808			
	<i>PIN</i> <sub>2</sub>	<i>PIN</i> <sub>2,2</sub>	0.705	0.88	0.836	0.549
		<i>PIN</i> <sub>2,3</sub>	0.745			
		<i>PIN</i> <sub>2,5</sub>	0.775			
		<i>PIN</i> <sub>2,7</sub>	0.707			
		<i>PIN</i> <sub>2,8</sub>	0.745			
		<i>PIN</i> <sub>2,10</sub>	0.768			
	<i>PIN</i> <sub>3</sub>	<i>PIN</i> <sub>3,6</sub>	0.753	0.878	0.827	0.591
		<i>PIN</i> <sub>3,7</sub>	0.779			
		<i>PIN</i> <sub>3,8</sub>	0.744			
		<i>PIN</i> <sub>3,9</sub>	0.810			
		<i>PIN</i> <sub>3,10</sub>	0.756			
<i>SI</i>	<i>SLS</i> <sub>1</sub>	<i>SLS</i> <sub>1,2</sub>	0.849	0.824	0.773	0.701
		<i>SLS</i> <sub>1,3</sub>	0.825			
	<i>SLS</i> <sub>2</sub>	<i>SLS</i> <sub>2,1</sub>	0.863	0.851	0.779	0.741
		<i>SLS</i> <sub>2,2</sub>	0.858			
	<i>SLS</i> <sub>3</sub>	<i>SLS</i> <sub>3,2</sub>	0.762	0.878	0.840	0.591
		<i>SLS</i> <sub>3,3</sub>	0.847			
	<i>SLS</i> <sub>4</sub>	<i>SLS</i> <sub>4,2</sub>	0.762	0.769	0.850	0.625
		<i>SLS</i> <sub>4,3</sub>	0.818			
	<i>SLS</i> <sub>5</sub>	<i>SLS</i> <sub>5,1</sub>	0.781	0.814	0.862	0.625
		<i>SLS</i> <sub>5,2</sub>	0.778			
		<i>SLS</i> <sub>5,3</sub>	0.753			
	<i>SLS</i> <sub>6</sub>	<i>SLS</i> <sub>6,1</sub>	0.703	0.787	0.840	0.594
		<i>SLS</i> <sub>6,2</sub>	0.760			
		<i>SLS</i> <sub>6,3</sub>	0.765			
	<i>SLS</i> <sub>7</sub>	<i>SLS</i> <sub>7,1</sub>	0.716	0.805	0.862	0.58
		<i>SLS</i> <sub>7,2</sub>	0.761			
		<i>SLS</i> <sub>7,3</sub>	0.805			
	<i>SLS</i> <sub>8</sub>	<i>SLS</i> <sub>8,1</sub>	0.781	0.809	0.870	0.586
		<i>SLS</i> <sub>8,2</sub>	0.795			
		<i>SLS</i> <sub>8,3</sub>	0.718			
	<i>SLS</i> <sub>9</sub>	<i>SLS</i> <sub>9,1</sub>	0.774	0.827	0.846	0.614
		<i>SLS</i> <sub>9,2</sub>	0.777			
		<i>SLS</i> <sub>9,3</sub>	0.799			
	<i>SLS</i> <sub>10</sub>	<i>SLS</i> <sub>10,1</sub>	0.784	0.824	0.885	0.609
		<i>SLS</i> <sub>10,2</sub>	0.810			
		<i>SLS</i> <sub>10,3</sub>	0.746			



3.1.2. Discriminant validity

Discriminant validity ensures that each construct is distinct and nonoverlapping. It was evaluated via the Fornell–Larcker criterion (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), which requires the square root of a construct’s AVE to exceed its correlations with other constructs.

According to Tables 3 and 4, the measurement model in this study is reliable, convergently valid, and discriminantly valid, making it suitable for structural model testing.

**Table 3** Fornell–Larcker criterion.

	<i>PI</i> <sub>1</sub>	<i>PI</i> <sub>2</sub>	<i>PI</i> <sub>3</sub>	<i>PIN</i> <sub>1</sub>	<i>PIN</i> <sub>2</sub>	<i>PIN</i> <sub>3</sub>	<i>SLS</i> <sub>1</sub>	<i>SLS</i> <sub>2</sub>	<i>SLS</i> <sub>3</sub>	<i>SLS</i> <sub>4</sub>	<i>SLS</i> <sub>5</sub>	<i>SLS</i> <sub>6</sub>	<i>SLS</i> <sub>7</sub>	<i>SLS</i> <sub>8</sub>	<i>SLS</i> <sub>9</sub>	<i>SLS</i> <sub>10</sub>
<i>PI</i> <sub>1</sub>	0.683															
<i>PI</i> <sub>2</sub>	0.484	0.737														
<i>PI</i> <sub>3</sub>	0.463	0.678	0.699													
<i>PIN</i> <sub>1</sub>	0.887	0.494	0.484	0.712												
<i>PIN</i> <sub>2</sub>	0.646	0.559	0.512	0.695	0.668											
<i>PIN</i> <sub>3</sub>	0.599	0.53	0.442	0.637	0.734	0.672										
<i>SLS</i> <sub>1</sub>	0.122	0.226	0.165	0.132	0.19	0.276	0.728									
<i>SLS</i> <sub>2</sub>	0.274	0.371	0.329	0.249	0.353	0.357	0.486	0.78								
<i>SLS</i> <sub>3</sub>	0.216	0.24	0.239	0.226	0.327	0.356	0.534	0.464	0.725							
<i>SLS</i> <sub>4</sub>	0.203	0.253	0.205	0.21	0.206	0.273	0.281	0.274	0.337	0.7						
<i>SLS</i> <sub>5</sub>	0.344	0.418	0.357	0.33	0.44	0.501	0.415	0.414	0.453	0.253	0.699					
<i>SLS</i> <sub>6</sub>	0.341	0.474	0.413	0.299	0.366	0.377	0.353	0.421	0.328	0.205	0.459	0.771				
<i>SLS</i> <sub>7</sub>	0.348	0.418	0.408	0.371	0.392	0.416	0.313	0.449	0.399	0.349	0.336	0.322	0.743			
<i>SLS</i> <sub>8</sub>	0.181	0.384	0.373	0.197	0.339	0.322	0.407	0.411	0.343	0.196	0.371	0.394	0.328	0.762		
<i>SLS</i> <sub>9</sub>	0.25	0.373	0.386	0.234	0.321	0.344	0.453	0.52	0.448	0.191	0.406	0.434	0.41	0.493	0.765	
<i>SLS</i> <sub>10</sub>	0.379	0.437	0.347	0.358	0.357	0.409	0.385	0.526	0.382	0.233	0.41	0.464	0.359	0.373	0.442	0.783

3.1.3. Structural model evaluation

The structural model evaluates the linear regression effects among endogenous constructs (Hair et al., 2020) by identifying patterns of interrelationships (Hair et al., 2021). This process involves several stages of testing.

3.1.4. Collinearity assessment

Collinearity was assessed via the VIF values from the SmartPLS 4 output. A VIF value below 5 indicates no multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2021). The results are presented below:

**Table 4** The VIF values for the structural model.

Outer Model	VIF
<i>PI</i> → <i>SL</i>	2.368
<i>PI</i> * <i>PIN</i> → <i>SL</i>	1.455

All the construct indicators have VIF values less than 5 (see Table 4), indicating no collinearity among the indicators of character education internalization, parental involvement, and students’ life skills. Thus, no constructs needed to be removed.

3.1.5. Coefficient of determination

The R<sup>2</sup> value shows the proportion of variance in the dependent variable explained by predictors, ranging from 0 to 1, and reflects the predictive accuracy of the model. Chin and Marcoulides (1998) suggested thresholds of 0.19 (weak), 0.33 (moderate), and 0.67 (substantial). The results are shown in Table 5.

**Table 5** R-square values.

R-Square	
<i>SL</i>	0.406

An R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.406 indicates that student life skills fall into the moderate category. This means that Pancasila Internalization and Parental Involvement explain 40.6% of the variance in Student Life Skills, whereas the remaining 59.4% is explained by other factors outside this model.

3.2. f<sup>2</sup> Effect size



According to Cohen (2013), a  $f^2$  value of 0.02 indicates a small effect, 0.15 a moderate effect, and 0.35 a substantial effect. Effect size testing examines the extent to which each independent variable influences the endogenous construct. The SmartPLS 4 output is presented in Table 6 below.

**Table 6** F-square values.

Variable	$f^2$	Information
$PI \rightarrow SL$	0.138	Minor Effect
$PI * PIN \rightarrow SL$	0.080	Minor Effect

Two conclusions can be drawn. First, Pancasila Internalization has an effect size of 0.138 on Student Life Skills. Removing it from the model would only slightly reduce explanatory power. Second, the interaction between Pancasila Internalization and parental involvement has an effect size of 0.080, meaning that excluding it would also result in only a minor reduction in the model’s ability to explain student life skills.

**3.3. Predictive relevance  $Q^2$**

The Stone–Geisser  $Q^2$  value (Sharma et al., 2021) is an indicator of a model’s predictive relevance. Using the blindfolding procedure, the  $Q^2$  values obtained were greater than zero (see Table 7), indicating that the structural model in this study demonstrated satisfactory predictive relevance. The results of the  $Q^2$  predictive relevance test are presented in Table 7 below.

**Table 7** Q-square values.

q-Square	
$SL$	0.096

The  $Q^2$  value of 0.096 indicates that the model has predictive relevance, as the value exceeds zero. This means that the model explains 9.6% of the variance in the data. According to (Hair et al., 2020), this effect is relatively small, yet it still demonstrates meaningful predictive capability within the research context.

**3.4. Hypothesis test**

A t test was conducted to examine the hypotheses by predicting causal relationships among latent variables and testing the significance of these effects. The t values were obtained from the SmartPLS 4 output. A path is considered significant when the t value exceeds the critical threshold (e.g., 1.65 at 10%, 1.96 at 5%, and 2.58 at 1% significance levels). The research hypotheses can be seen in the Table 8.

**Table 8** Research hypotheses.

No	Hypothesis	Statement
1	$H_{0.1}$	There is no significant effect of Pancasila Internalization on Student Life Skills.
	$H_{1.1}$	There is a significant effect of Pancasila Internalization on Student Life Skills.
2	$H_{0.2}$	Parental Involvement does not strengthen or weaken the effect of Pancasila Internalization on Student Life Skills.
	$H_{1.2}$	Parental Involvement strengthens or weakens the effect of Pancasila Internalization on Student Life Skills.

To validate both direct and indirect effects, the bootstrapping procedure (Coutts and Hayes, 2023; Tofighi and Kelley, 2020) was used to test the statistical significance of the path coefficients. The results (Table 9) indicate a significant direct effect of character education internalization on students’ life skills ( $\beta = 0.440$ ;  $t = 4.693$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). A significant indirect effect was also found through parental involvement as a mediating variable ( $\beta = 0.158$ ;  $t = 4.201$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). The tables also present mean values, standard deviations, t values, and p values, all of which support the conclusion that both direct and moderating effects are statistically significant.

These findings confirm the importance of the internalization of character education in the development of students’ life skills and highlight the reinforcing role of parental involvement. The moderation effect indicates that value internalization is more effectively translated into practical life skills when supported by active parental engagement. This result also contributes theoretically by extending the understanding of value internalization mechanisms and offers practical implications for educators and policymakers seeking to enhance student competencies through collaborative school–family efforts.

Table 9 shows that Pancasila Internalization has a significant effect on Student Life Skills, with a path coefficient of 0.440. This means that for every one-unit increase in Pancasila Internalization, student life skills increase by 44%. The effect is positive and significant at the 5% level, confirming that student life skills are directly influenced by Pancasila Internalization. The interaction between Pancasila Internalization and Parental Involvement also has a significant positive effect on Student Life Skills, with a path coefficient of 0.158. This finding shows that parental involvement strengthens the influence of Pancasila Internalization. The higher the level of parental engagement is, the stronger the effect of Pancasila Internalization on Student Life Skills.



**Table 9** Results of hypothesis testing.

Path	Variable	Path Coefficient	t-statistics	p value
<i>PI</i> → <i>SL</i>	Pancasila Internalization → Student Life Skills	0.440	4.693	0.000*
<i>PI</i>	Parental Involvement moderating the effect of Pancasila Internalization on	0.158	4.201	0.000*
* <i>PIN</i> → <i>SL</i>	Student Life Skills			

#### 4. Discussion

The structural model results show that the internalization of Pancasila values (character education) has a positive and significant effect on students' life skills, with a path coefficient of  $\beta = 0.440$  ( $t = 4.693$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). This finding supports the view that character education develops moral attitudes and practical competencies for academic and social challenges. Studies by (Sultoni et al., 2019) also revealed that internalized character education fosters independence, discipline, and social skills. In short, the stronger the character values instilled in schools are, the more likely students are to acquire adaptive life skills. Similar findings in Malaysia revealed that character building combined with parental collaboration significantly strengthens children's life skills (Erlina et al., 2024). These results align with the theoretical perspective of Marasabessy et al. (2022), who argued that character education addresses moral degradation by embedding core values in learners. Similarly, Dakir et al., (2015) emphasized that value-oriented religious education enhances self-control and supports personality development. Evidence from early childhood studies also reinforces this point. Madyawati et al. (2023) showed that integrating Islamic parenting values improves children's socioemotional growth, highlighting the role of family in value internalization. Yin and Xu (2024) further demonstrated that structured value coaching through sports effectively instills essential life skills. Together, these perspectives confirm that the internalization of Pancasila values through learning, parental involvement, and role modelling strengthens both moral attitudes and social competencies.

Parental involvement was also found to significantly moderate the relationship between Pancasila value internalization and students' life skills, with a path coefficient of  $\beta = 0.158$  ( $t = 4.201$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). This finding indicates that the more engaged parents are, the stronger the effect of character education on students' life skills. These findings are consistent with those of Thahir et al. (2024), who showed that parental involvement improves motivation, discipline, and adaptability. In Indonesia, Haron (2025) reported that positive school–family interaction enhances socioemotional development and academic achievement. Parental involvement theory, reviewed by Martins et al. (2022), identifies three main forms of engagement: communication with schools, participation in learning activities, and psychosocial support. Ates (2021) added that engagement improves academic performance, motivation, and social skills. This finding is consistent with Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, which places the family as the closest microsystem with a strong influence on children's development.

In Indonesia, Sumarsono et al. (2025) highlighted that communication between parents and schools fosters children's social attitudes and adaptive skills. Hadi et al. (2025) and Huda (2024) showed that parental involvement in civic education promotes social concern and collaboration. International studies have reached similar conclusions. Aliza Trigina et al. (2025) reported that parental support in the Pancasila Student Profile project enhanced students' democratic awareness and social skills. Kliziene et al. (2021) revealed that integrating value education into physical education strengthens character and well-being when supported by families. These findings underscore the crucial mediating role of parental involvement in linking character education to life skills, which remains underexplored.

Barriers such as time constraints, socioeconomic differences, and limited understanding of educational roles can hinder parental involvement (Sengonul, 2022). This suggests that schools cannot achieve full success in character education without parental support. This study makes a theoretical contribution by identifying parental involvement. The  $R^2$  value of 0.406 indicates that Pancasila value internalization and parental involvement together explain 40.6% of the variance in students' life skills. This is considered moderate, implying that other factors—such as peer influence, media, or psychological aspects—may also play a role. The  $Q^2$  value of 0.096 shows that the model has predictive relevance, although at a low level. Future studies should explore additional factors, such as teacher leadership, school culture, or community engagement (Thahir et al., 2025). In all cases, the importance of the parent–school relationship is undeniable, as “the family is the most important and most enduring resource in a child's life” and “family–school partnerships produce impressive results for children and teachers” (Hamlin, 2022; Sumeyra et al., 2021). In terms of effect size, the  $f^2$  results show that the direct effect of character education on life skills is small (0.138), whereas the moderating effect of parental involvement is also small (0.080). These small but significant effects remain meaningful in education, as they highlight the need for continuous collaboration between schools and families. UNESCO (2015) similarly emphasized that successful 21st-century education requires synergy between schools and families.

Parental involvement refers to the active participation of parents in their child's life at home and at school, encompassing positive attitudes, supportive behaviors, supervision, and academic expectations (Ahmed et al., 2022; Hamlin, 2022). Research has shown that home-based parental involvement is positively associated with academic success, particularly when parents cooperate with teachers to monitor and assist with schoolwork (Makin et al., 2018). Mothers are especially

pivotal, as family interaction is a primary social experience during critical periods of a child's development (Hsieh, 2023; Rocha et al., 2020). Moreover, parental involvement is linked with executive functions (Vrantsidis et al., 2020), behavioral problems (Panda et al., 2021), academic achievement (Ates, 2021), and mental health outcomes (Talevi et al., 2020). Additional international studies further extend these findings. For example, the Association between Parenting Behavior and Executive Functioning in Children and Young Adolescents revealed that responsible and consistent parenting correlates with better performance in executive function tasks, even when controlling for socioeconomic variables, and the Effect of Family Involvement on Students' Social-Emotional Development: The Mediational Role of School Engagement revealed that family involvement supports social-emotional growth through student engagement in school contexts. Collectively, these findings suggest that parental support and involvement not only improve academic achievement (Sunaengsih et al., 2021) but also cultivate students' life skills, such as self-regulation, decision-making, communication, and resilience, which are essential for success in a rapidly changing world.

Parents are a child's first teachers, guiding and raising them to become responsible members of society. In formal education, they act as primary supporters by ensuring readiness and encouragement. Parental involvement is particularly important in primary education, as it not only improves achievement but also shapes morals, attitudes, and social adaptability. This involvement helps strengthen life skills such as independence, discipline, communication, cooperation, emotional regulation, and decision-making, which are crucial for everyday challenges. Paul et al. (2022) suggested that parents foster life skills and mental health in home-based learning, although variations in parenting patterns exist across schools (Sumeysra et al., 2021; Thahir et al., 2023). Additionally, parents are encouraged to participate in school decision-making, which requires management and leadership skills (Yulianti et al., 2022).

Overall, this study confirms that character education cannot succeed without parental support. While schools play a central role, parental involvement through guidance, modelling, and mentoring amplifies its impact on life skills. International evidence shows that parental engagement enhances socioemotional and cognitive outcomes. Weiland et al. (2024) reported that home-based, school-based, and home-school conferencing positively influence children's character, especially when parent-teacher relationships are strong. Panaoura (2021) reported that parental engagement in mathematics learning improves both performance and traits such as perseverance, responsibility, and cooperation. These findings support earlier evidence of the importance of parents during critical developmental stages (Jeong et al., 2021) and their impact on executive function, behavior, and mental health. This study therefore contributes new insights by framing character education within a collaborative model, in which schools serve as central agents and families serve as primary mediators in strengthening life skills such as self-regulation, communication, decision-making, and resilience.

## 5. Final Considerations

The findings of this study demonstrate that the internalization of character education values has a positive and significant effect on students' life skills ( $\beta = 0.440$ ;  $t = 4.693$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). Furthermore, parental involvement was confirmed as a significant mediating factor that strengthens this relationship ( $\beta = 0.158$ ;  $t = 4.201$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). The  $R^2$  value of 0.406 indicates that the proposed model explains approximately 40.6% of the variance in students' life skills, which falls within the moderate category. Consequently, all hypotheses formulated in this study are empirically supported.

The main implication of these findings is that character education implemented in schools cannot operate in isolation from parental engagement. Collaboration between schools and families has emerged as a critical factor in fostering students' life skills, including critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and self-regulation. The novelty of this research lies in its integrative conceptual model, which positions parental involvement as a mediating variable, thereby offering a fresh contribution to the discourse on character education and life skills development within the Indonesian educational context.

### 5.1. Practical implications

This study has several practical implications for educators, policymakers, and parents. First, schools should not only design character education curricula but also create structured programs that actively engage parents in the learning process. Regular parent-teacher communication, workshops, and joint activities can help bridge the gap between formal education and home environments. Second, teachers should serve as facilitators who encourage parents to consistently nurture character values and life skills at home. Third, policymakers should integrate parental involvement into national education strategies, recognizing it as a crucial component of the holistic development of students' competencies.

### 5.2. Future research directions

Although this study confirms the mediating role of parental involvement, future research could explore several areas further. First, longitudinal studies are needed to examine how parental engagement and character education interact over time in shaping life skills. Second, comparative studies across different cultural or socioeconomic contexts would enrich the understanding of variations in parental involvement. Third, future work could include additional mediating or moderating variables, such as peer influence, the school climate, or digital learning environments, to build a more comprehensive model

of students' life skills development. By addressing these directions, scholars can expand the theoretical framework and generate more robust evidence for educational practice.

### 5.3. Research limitations

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the data were collected via a cross-sectional design, which restricts the ability to infer causal relationships over time. Longitudinal approaches would provide stronger evidence of how character education and parental involvement jointly influence students' life skills. Second, the study was conducted within the Indonesian educational context, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other cultural or educational settings. Comparative studies across different countries or regions are needed to validate the robustness of the proposed model. Third, this study relied primarily on self-reported measures, which may be subject to response bias. The incorporation of multiple data sources, such as teacher assessments, parental reports, or behavioral observations, could increase the validity of future investigations. Finally, the explanatory power of the model ( $R^2 = 0.406$ ) indicates that a substantial proportion of the variance in students' life skills remains unexplained, suggesting that additional variables—such as peer support, school climate, or digital learning experiences—should be considered in future research.

### Acknowledgement

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to all the individuals and institutions who provided invaluable support throughout the research process. Special thanks are extended to colleagues for their guidance, insightful discussions, and constructive feedback. The authors are also indebted to the administrative and technical staff who assisted in facilitating the data collection process, as well as to the participating schools and parents for their commitment and cooperation. Finally, the provision of facilities and institutional support that enabled the smooth execution of this study is deeply appreciated.

### 6. Declarations

#### 6.1. Ethical considerations

The research adhered to established ethical guidelines. Participation in the survey was fully voluntary, and every respondent gave informed consent before filling out the questionnaire. Participants were informed that their data would remain confidential and anonymous, and no personally identifiable information was obtained at any stage of the study.

#### 6.2. Use of artificial intelligence (AI)

The authors declare that no generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used in the preparation, analysis, or writing of this manuscript.

#### 6.3. Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

#### 6.4. Funding

This research was funded by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia (Kementerian Pendidikan Tinggi, Riset, dan Teknologi – Kemdiktisaintek) through the Directorate of Research and Community Service (Direktorat Penelitian dan Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat – DPPM).

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